


The Doom of Beauty

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1415-1564)

Translated from Italian 

“Choice soul, in whom, as in a glass, we see,
Mirrored in thy pure form and delicate,
What beauties heaven and nature can create,
The paragon of all their works to be!
Fair soul, in whom love, pity, piety,
Have found a home, as from thy outward state
We clearly read, and are so rare and great
That they adorn none other like to thee!
Love takes me captive; beauty binds my soul;
Pity and mercy with their gentle eyes
Wake in my heart a hope that cannot cheat.
What law, what destiny, what fell control,
What cruelty, or late or soon, denies
That death should spare perfection so complete?”

Translated by John Addington Symonds (1840-1893)

Illustration by Laurent Guidali

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